

OUT OF THE RUT

IDEAS AND ACTIVITIES IN BRIEF.

Our post-bag has brought us many samples of the doings of Local Parties and special messages sent out in connection with Christmas and the New Year, but the happiest of all we think comes from Frank Smith, the Labour candidate for the Nuneaton Division—the “one and only” Frank Smith to us, who was the brother in arms to Keir Hardie.

A New Year message takes the form of a four-page quarto. On the front page is a characteristically telling message from the candidate himself. There follows a striking indictment of Nuneaton's Tory M.P., and other articles of special value. We cannot resist reproducing one little skit on Capt. Hope, M.P., in which the reader is reminded of the old refrain—

“Has anyone seen my dear little dog?

Oh, where, oh, where is he?

With his hair cut short

And his tail cut long,

Oh, where, oh, where can he be?”

This is parodied—

“Has anyone seen a gent, some of us know—

Nuneaton's gallant M.P.?

With his military air

And his political flair,

Oh, where, oh, where can he be?”

The Maidstone “Pioneer” which is just a duplicated foolscap news sheet of several pages broadcasting the Labour Press Service and the Press Service of the T.U.C. excelled itself at Christmas and its artist, whoever he may be, got busy with the duplicator. Three pages are illustrated, and turkeys, geese, pork and a policeman, not to mention Bobby Bear, and a “Daily Herald” poster, all contributed to the bill o' fare. Certainly the Maidstone “Pioneer” is interesting. The local agent is Mr. James D. A. Law, of 36, Queens Road, Maidstone.

Coventry came along with a report of a successful Labour “Fayre” held on Friday, December 17th. Our Coventry comrades were able to distribute 10,000 copies of a 16 page, and cover, Souvenir prior to the Bazaar.

They actually made a profit on this venture, the advertisements secured paying for the printing. There is certainly something novel and commendatory in this method of advertising, and where most people would have spent a pile of money in advertising, our friends are to be congratulated on doing it at a profit.

Coventry L.P. also ran a Draw in connection with the admission tickets and the sales of these before the day brought in £110, while £13 in tickets was taken at the door! The financial result of the “Fayre,” therefore, ought to show a handsome margin. The agent is Mr. G. E. Hodgkinson, 28, Much Park Street, Coventry.

Relationship between the Local Labour Club and the Local Labour Party is not in all constituencies everything to be desired. It is therefore interesting to learn what has been done at Newport where Labour clubs are in a singularly prosperous condition.

Hitherto, although very closely associated, all the members of the Labour clubs were not individual members of the Party. They paid a subscription of 5/- per year for the use of the clubs and most of them assumed that this carried with it membership of the Party—a state of affairs not unknown elsewhere. A new arrangement has now been arrived at whereby one-fifth of the club subscriptions are to be handed over to the Labour Party, thus making all club members individual members of the Party. There are some 1,200 club members altogether and, as the separate individual membership only numbered about 500, the result of the arrangement is to increase the male individual membership by about 700.

The Agent and Club Secretary is Mr. W. B. Lewcock, 84, Stow Hill, Newport, Mon.

The Monthly Record of the East Lewisham Labour Party is now an eight page octavo with cover, and the December and January copies which have reached us indicate that the Divi-

sional Party is wonderfully active and well served with officers. We like to see the reports of Ward work and the list of Party fixtures that are given for this has a distinct effect on the public who may see the journal. The December number was a special Fair number and next month we hope to find room for a novel announcement which was contained therein.

LOCAL NEWSPAPER MEMS.

We have received the first three copies of the "Workers Monthly Companion," which is the somewhat unusual title of a little 16 page Magazine with coloured cover, circulating in Aldershot, Farnham, Fleet and North Hants. This journal is not run under the auspices of the Divisional Labour Party, but for the time being, at any rate, it is run by a literature and study circle which operates in close connection with the Party.

Of the first issue some 5,000 were distributed free throughout the Division, and apparently so well was the little paper liked, that orders have since been pouring in and the "Monthly Companion" is now sold at one penny. By way of creating an additional interest in the first issue, all the copies were consecutively numbered, and two numbers were chosen to receive presents of 10s. Treasury notes. The contents of the "Monthly Companion" strike us as being well selected, and well written, and we can imagine that the paper has come to stay.

Address: "The Workers' Monthly Companion," 59, St. George's Road, Aldershot.

The "Challenge," the organ of the Wellingborough Divisional Labour Party, continue to make progress, and each issue we have seen contains matter of exceptional interest. In the Christmas number a new feature presented itself in the person of Uncle Ernest (a somewhat thin disguise, we fancy), in "Labour Wireless." Wellingborough children are certainly lucky, for while children in other parts of the country are complaining of losing the B.B.C. Uncles and Aunties, Labour bairns in Wellingborough are treated to the following:—

Of what part of your Christmas fare does Mr. W. G. Cove, M.P., remind you? Answer:—The N.U.T. (National Union of Teachers).

Why does Mr. Cove resemble the Red Flag? Answer:—Because we've put him at the top of the poll (pole) and mean to keep him there.

Why is the Liberal Party like a Christmas orange? Answer:—Because it is pale yellow, has the pip, and is sure to be squeezed out.

What trade will Ramsay MacDonald follow after the next general election? Answer:—The trade of a cabinet-maker.

Why was Mr. Snowden the very best Chancellor of the Exchequer possible?

Answer:—Because he always gave the finances of the country a good Philip (fillip).

What article of dress best represents the work the Tory Government has done for the country? Answer:—A footless stocking without a leg.

Why is "The Challenge" the best political paper in the Wellingborough Division? Answer:—Because it is read (red) all over.

Why does the huge Aerodrome at Cardington resemble Parliament? Answer:—Because some of the greatest gas bags of the Government are there.

Among other papers received this month are the following:—

"Warrington and District Labour News," price one penny; 8 large pages of well printed and varied contents.

Address: Editor, Councillor D. Plinston, J.P., 27, Wallis Street, Warrington.

The East Ham (South) "Citizen"; 4 pages, slightly smaller than the "Daily Herald," of which 15,200 copies of the January number were circulated.

North Tottenham "Citizen," a similar paper of which 15,500 copies were printed. Both papers belong to a chain of papers published by the London Co-operative Society, Ltd. (Representational Council), 54, Maryland Street, Stratford, E.15.

The "Border Observer," an 8 page monthly magazine, price twopence; hails from Galashiels, but we fail to find an editorial address therein. It is printed for the proprietors by A. Walker and Sons, Ltd., Galashiels.

We regret that by an omission the name of the writer, Mr. W. B. Hargreaves, was not added to our article last month on "Bringing it Home to Them."

THE SECRETARY'S PAGE**HELPS AND HINTS IN SEASON.**

Our "Answers to Correspondents" column bears continual evidence of the sort and variety of problems which disturb the peace of mind of Labour secretaries. We would like to urge the even greater use of this column by our readers, for one or two instances have come to our notice lately where officers have erred for the want of a little simple knowledge or timely advice. There should be no excuse for a secretary who doesn't quite know how to manage a matter in hand failing to make some enquiry. The Head Office of the Party deals with hundreds of enquiries annually, while the "Labour Organiser" also deals with many questions through the post which are not of sufficient general interest to include in our published answers.

We recently came across an instance where a secretary, who certainly ought to have known better, involved himself in a lawyer's fee over the simple ques-

tion dealt with in this issue of whether or no his candidate might address a meeting in licensed premises. This was a question that might have been answered over the telephone, and certainly more quickly than the lawyer answered it, for the latter found himself under the necessity of "consulting with his London agents"!

Copies of the Report of the 26th Annual Conference of the Labour Party held at Margate have now been circulated to all affiliated bodies, and we cannot too strongly urge the importance of this report to Labour secretaries. Dozens of questions constantly asked can be answered by reference to the current and past reports of the Party. The present report, consisting of 384 pages and cover, contains the Party E.C. Report (including, of course, references to practically every

Councillor (Ex-private) Jim Simmons**The Premier Labour Ex-Service Propagandist.****Who he is.**

1917. He brought a message from the Trenches and was imprisoned.

1918. Again imprisoned.

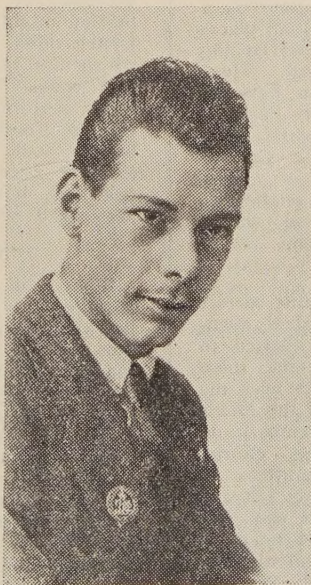
1918-19. Organiser Birmingham I.L.P.

1919-21. Chairman Midlands Division I.L.P.

1922-23. N.A.C., I.L.P.

1924. Polled over 11,000 as Labour Candidate against Sir A. Steel-Maitland (re-adopted).

1926. Appointed Chief Whip and Deputy Leader of the Birmingham City Council Labour Group.

**What he can Speak of.**

Local Government Topics.
(Six years' experience.)

Militarism and anti-Militarism.

Labour National Policy.

Unemployment
(from experience).

Land Question.

Socialism.

Religion and Socialism.

How you can get him.

For a single meeting.

For a week-end.

For a week or ten days' mission, indoors or open-air.

Particulars from

**35 Tonbridge Road
Erdington, B'ham.**

Particulars from

**35 Tonbridge Road
Erdington, B'ham.**

activity of the Party and valuable as a record of very many things); report of the Joint Labour Party and T.U.C. Departments; full list of Societies affiliated to the Party with addresses, number of members, and affiliation fees paid; report of Margate proceedings, and several appendices, including Party Constitution and Standing Orders; record of past conferences; lists of Labour Members, candidates and agents; and other references of vital and current interest. The Report is a marvellously cheap shilling's worth, and we cannot imagine any Labour speaker or secretary presuming to understand the doings or the views of the Labour Party without perusing this report, and keeping it for ready reference during the year—and, indeed, long afterwards.

One of the little problems constantly exercising the minds of secretaries is the manner in which individual male members shall function collectively within the Party. The functions of the Women's Sections are generally defined and understood, and in most Parties there appears to be a clear field in which the Women's Sections can function. But there is often doubt about the formation of Men's Individual Sections. And there is a very practical objection in small places to the duplication and overlapping which seems to be involved. Theoretically, the Men's Sections have an equal right and place in the Party to Women's Sections, and while their delegates are elected to the General Committee and partake in Party work there, definite duties relating to propaganda and organisation should be undertaken by the Section.

But this of course looks quite correct till one realises that individual members in most towns are allotted to their Ward Committees and these latter bodies themselves take over the functions just mentioned. If the Men's Sections are to meet and embark on propaganda and organising efforts, what are the Ward Committees to do? The difficulty commonly felt can be expressed in the reversed way. We believe the problem in most towns is best met by the Individual Men's Section confining themselves to very occasional meetings for the election

of delegates, and throwing their individual work into the Ward Committees. This, however, will not work in every place. In those towns where the individual members outnumber the affiliated members, what we have said about duplicating the ward work would be perfectly true. But in other towns affiliated membership predominates, and the Individual Men's Section is by no means a duplicate of the Ward Committee. Here then is very definite work for the section to do. It can undertake a membership campaign and probably in such cases there are other uncontested fields for propaganda activities which the section might embark upon with the consent of the Local Party.

It is in the rural areas and the places where Trade Unionism is very weak that the difficulty we have spoken of is most felt. A Polling District Committee is a body composed of individual men and women members, whether affiliated or individual. Are the men members to meet in the Polling District Committee (often called the Local Labour Party) and also to meet separately as individual members to perform much the same functions. In our opinion this is not necessary or advisable. A Women's Section might well exist for a Polling District area, but there is no real work which the Individual Members' Section could perform that cannot be better performed through the Polling District Committee. The male members should certainly be called together once a year to elect their delegates, but the section otherwise need have no being.

"One of the acutest political observers in Smethwick—a man who has his fingers on the political pulse of the division—assured me to-day that the struggle is now quite definitely between the Liberal and the Labour candidates. There is every indication that this statement represents the position." Thus one of the Liberal scribes in the "Birmingham Gazette" in the second week of the Smethwick by-election. Can one wonder that when people so blind themselves that leaders of Liberalism fail to see the writing on the wall? But what does the "acute political observer" think of the majority?

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Must Members be Trades Unionists?

Question.—Can you please inform me what is the position of members of the Party who are not Trades Unionists, or can a person join the Party who is not a Trades Unionist? I am under the impression that some change was made in this respect quite recently.

Answer.—Our correspondent is quite correct. By a narrow majority and without much discussion, the following words were added to clause 2 of the Party Constitution at the London Conference in 1924:—

“and who, if eligible for Trades Union membership, are Trade Unionists.”

Clause 2 therefore now reads:—

MEMBERSHIP.

“The Labour Party shall consist of all its affiliated organisations (Trade Unions, Socialist, Co-operative Societies, Trades Councils, and Local Labour Parties) together with those men and women who are individual members of a local Labour Party, who subscribe to the Constitution and Programme of the Party, and who, if eligible for Trade Union membership, are Trade Unionists.”

We cannot say we have any great enthusiasm for the amendment made, not because we do not desire to see every member of the Party a Trade Unionist, but because of the restrictive effect on new membership which such clause might have if generally observed and harshly applied. There is a place for Trade Unionists within the Party, and their powers and influence are in no peril from an influx of new individual members who are not Trade Unionists. On the other hand individual members are given a distinct place and rights in the Constitution, and the logical effect of compulsory Trades Union membership would be to extinguish the necessity for individual membership almost altogether. But where the shoe pinches in regard to this well meaning, but, as we think, mistaken addition, is in the very places where we desire most particularly to advance. How can we tell the rural worker in large tracts of the country where no Trades Union organisation exists that he is eligible for a Union, and that he must join one before we can take his money? We are afraid this procedure is more honoured in the

breach than in the observance, and we trust that wiser counsels will prevail in regard to this matter when the Constitution is revised.

Auditors or Accountants?

Question.—Our financial year being nearly ended, should I be in order in moving that our accounts be audited by a Chartered Accountant? It seems to me desirable this should be done.

Answer.—The proposal our correspondent makes is not new in regard to the national accounts of the Party, but it is certainly novel in regard to the accounts of a Local Labour Party. We do not agree with the necessity for this course either locally or nationally, and it is relevant to remark that the other Parties do not even publish account of income and expenditure, leave alone go to possible opponents for the purposes of audit. We believe too that the term “Chartered Accountant” refers only to a comparatively small body of men, but that there are other public accountants equally qualified, but not “chartered” who could do such work with equal efficiency. However, although there might be a plausible case made out for the audit of the National Party accounts to be taken in this way, there is no earthly case for those of a Local Party to be thus audited. Even nationally the expense would be very great, and the work would be done with no greater efficiency than in the past, besides the risk of disclosing intimate matters to the eyes of opponents and their staff. Practically every Local Party possesses some members capable of intelligent auditing, though we know of very few Parties who could afford to pay an accountant for the job.

Meetings in Licensed Premises.

Question.—What can we do about using our club as a Committee Room at the next elections. Is not this illegal and can you tell me also whether our candidate would be doing wrong by visiting a Trades Union Branch meeting which meets in a public house and speaking there?

Answer.—We have answered a similar question in the “Labour Organiser” on a previous occasion, but as our answer was given as far back as November, 1920, we will deal with the question over again.

Our correspondent, however, is not clear enough. We presume his club to be a licensed club, and if this is a political club it makes all the difference. We rather infer that the club ("our" club) is in close association with the Party, and without doubt "political." Our correspondent is also silent regarding the kind of elections he means. We cannot do better than quote what we said just over 6 years ago.

"Summarised, the position as to the use of licensed houses for meeting purposes or as committee rooms, stands thus—

Parliamentary Election :

Meetings not prohibited.

Committee Rooms prohibited—except in the case of a permanent political club.

County Councils and Municipal Elections :

Meetings prohibited.

Committee rooms prohibited and no exception for political clubs.

District Council Elections :

Meetings permitted in rural district areas only.

Committee rooms prohibited.

The differing rules become easier to remember if one bears in mind the general probabilities and circumstances of each kind of election, for this matter appears to have been borne in mind by our legislators when framing the statutes. A Parliamentary constituency may embrace areas where under certain circumstances licensed premises may offer the only room available. This is clearly the guiding consideration that accounts for the permission to use such premises in district council elections in rural district council areas only. In Municipal areas it is obvious that greater alternative facilities may be expected to exist—hence the prohibition. So, too, in the case of a permanent political club. It may conceivably be the only suitable premises for certain sorts of work at a Parliamentary election, and anyway, the connection between a permanent political club and a Parliamentary contest would, at the time the statutes were passed, certainly be more clear and defensible, and possibly general, than a similar relationship between a club and municipal contests where the same line of cleavage and consequent relationship, might not be expected to exist.

The wise agent will under no circumstances avail himself of any latitude in the directions spoken of unless every possible alternative course has

proved impossible. In practice the problem in the Labour Party centres round two questions. The first is the natural desire to use the growing number of Labour premises to which a club, where food or drink is sold, is attached. But this simply must not be done in the cases shown above where such use is prohibited, and in the other case a committee room on club premises is open to dangers and disadvantages. Neither is a meeting on such premises likely to attract outsiders as well as one on independent premises. In the case of new clubs (and there are many new schemes uncompleted) all danger can be avoided by building or altering premises so as to give separate access to rooms or halls intended to be put to political use or general letting; the place must be shut off, there must be no communicating inside doors.

The second question is more complex. It concerns the legality or otherwise of Trade Union meetings at which the candidature is under consideration, and where the branch meeting is held in licensed premises. Here it is possible to raise up bogies, but the position is fairly simple. If a T.U. Branch meeting is *bona fide* convened, and it discusses the candidates and election, from the point of view—as it will do—of discovering its own interests and declaring its decision thereon, it no more infringes the Corrupt Practices Acts than the moist-mouthed orators in the tap-room or the bar. The discussion by the Branch as to how to use its influence on the side it favoured, would not convert a *bona fide* T.U. meeting into an election meeting; nor would the action of individuals seeking to persuade fellow Trade Unionists to work make the room a committee room. But there arrives a point where enthusiasm oversteps the fine distinctions that can be drawn, and then it is time to adjourn elsewhere. So, too, if the endeavours of individuals take on the nature of systemisation or permanence, the question of whether the room is a "committee room" or not becomes one that isn't safe to chance too much. The golden rule is not to lose the influence, interest and enthusiasm of the Branch, where it is to be got, but beyond that, don't push the matter to the point of doing work there or getting things done that are proper to be done elsewhere.

(continued on page 11)

LABOUR PARTY FINANCE.

By the Editor.

ARTICLE IV.

Is there any practical possibility of placing the majority of Local Labour Parties in the country on a sound and satisfactory financial basis within the bounds of the present constitution of the Labour Party and the present distribution of its affiliated resources? Our answer to this question would be an unqualified Yes. During the 6½ years of its existence the "Labour Organiser" has published instance after instance of Local Labour Parties who have succeeded in building for themselves a steady and permanent income, and who have firmly established themselves in their constituency as well conducted concerns of sound financial reliability. That this has been done is proof that it can be done elsewhere, and in every case one finds that success has been achieved by the adoption of one or two courses entirely in harmony with the Party Constitution, and, in fact, actually suggested by it.

Ideas, that, by some magic distribution of Party resources, Local Labour Parties can receive a mysterious income from somewhere outside their own constituency are, in our opinion, all illusory. We know of no scheme or prospect of any redistribution of Party resources, or any rearrangement in the future, that is likely to result in added income from outside to Divisional Labour Parties. Quite the reverse, we believe that the future development of the Party will involve contributions of greatly increased amount from Divisional Parties themselves for the sustenance of national activities and the possible strengthening of a few weaker places in the kingdom. And beyond this there is a burden which we must anticipate and boldly face sooner or later in the maintenance of representatives on Local Government bodies, pending a time when a Labour Government can secure payment of expenses or remuneration for those engaged in this work. This question, vital as it is to Labour Government, in its broadest and truest sense, has hardly yet been considered by the Party.

How, then, are Parties to meet the present and the coming situation? Apart from subsidies from Trade Unions and Candidate, there are three

main sources of income open to all Local Parties, and each one of these three sources of income has been so developed by some Parties or other as alone to provide a sufficient income for Local Party needs. But, generally speaking, neither one of these three resources is yet developed to the extent of meeting present necessities. We are optimistic enough to believe that we stand at the threshold of a huge change in the financial prospects and outlook of Local Labour Parties, and that the necessity for self-support is at last becoming realised.

The three resources we speak of are—(1) Trade Union affiliation fees, (2) Social activities, and (3) Individual members' contributions.

Taking these questions in the order given, it is astonishing to observe how general became the minimum local affiliation fee mentioned in the model rules of the Party. When this matter was considered in 1917 twopence per affiliated member per annum may have seemed a big sum to demand from affiliated members, or on the other hand perhaps its moderation secured an easier acceptance and a readier adoption of rules all round. But in what constituency in the country can this affiliation fee be made to realise even a third of the Labour Agent's salary, leave alone the cost of upkeep, propaganda, and general organisation and expenses of the Party? We venture to say that a twopenny affiliation fee is hopelessly out of date and altogether out of keeping with the present outlook and responsibilities of the Party or with the temper of most local Movements if the problem were properly presented to them.

One of the troubles which frequently arises in Local Parties is friction between the affiliated member, who feels that in paying his minimum of 1s. per year he is doing more than the Trade Unionist whom he chafes against, and who through his Union only sends twopence to the local funds. This, of course, is not a justifiable attitude, but in practice the vast number of male individual members are also affiliated members, and their additional fee is paid because of a realisation that the

affiliation fee is too little, and does not cover expenses. How much more obvious it seems to raise the affiliation fee to a respectable figure. We know of cases where a shilling per year is demanded, and of one case, at any rate, where 1s. 6d. a year is the fee. There are lots of cases where 6d. and 4d. is required.

We do not suggest that by wafting a magic wand or merely passing a resolution any Local Party is going to double or treble its affiliation income. We are also well aware of the trouble when affiliation fees are raised that some branches merely continue to pay the old sum by reducing the number of members paid for. But these difficulties and the problem itself all point to the one cure. There must be more work in the Trade Union branches; the ground must be prepared and political education carried on. From our own observations we are convinced that there has been a slackening in the last two or three years in propaganda work within Trades Union branches. In the first three or four years of the Party Constitution, when affiliations had to be obtained, a good deal of deputation

work went on, but there has been a settling down since, and as the Trades Unions have been going through a bad time very little thought has been given to the possibility of placing the affiliation, already secured, on a more practical and paying footing.

Surely, one may hope, the corner has at last been turned in Trades Union depression, and we can look at new problems and new responsibilities in a bolder spirit and with the determination to solve them. An unanswerable case can be put up to Trades Union branches for solid support to the political machine, and the sum ultimately asked for per member, even if it be a shilling per year, is so trifling that notwithstanding all the internal difficulties there may be, the job is worth tackling, and it promises some success. We venture, therefore, to give as our first suggestion, the advice to concentrate among the Trades Unions on an increased affiliation fee and a better understanding of the Party's work and responsibilities.

We shall continue our suggestions next month.

(To be continued.)

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W. W. BORRETT,
Manager

OVERSEERS AND REGISTERS.**New Procedure Under the Rating and Valuation Act, 1925.**

We have been favoured with a copy of a Home Office circular to Registration Officers enclosing the draft of a special order proposed to be made by the Minister of Health under Section 2 of the Rating and Valuation Act, 1925, which we print below, and from which it will be seen that for future registers the responsibility for supplying the information will be shifted from the Overseers to the new officers appointed under the Act named.

Under Rule 7 in the First Schedule to the Representation of the People Act, 1918, the Registration Officer may require the overseers to prepare and publish the electors lists on his behalf, and by Section I. of the Juries Act, 1922, he may require the overseers to furnish particulars of persons qualified and liable to serve as jurors for the purpose of their names being duly marked in the register of electors, forming the jurors' book. Article 3 of the proposed Order will transfer to the Rating Authority the powers and duties of overseers relating to the preparation of the jurors' book and register of electors, and, if the Registration Officer desires to avail himself of the powers given to him by the enactments mentioned or either of them, the Rating Authority, on his request, will designate an officer or officers to perform the duties. The remuneration of a designated officer in respect of the preparation of the register will be paid as registration expenses and in respect of the preparation of the jurors' book will be paid by the Rating Authority.

The Secretary of State suggests that the Registration Officer should proceed forthwith to consider what are the most suitable arrangements for the proper preparation of the jurors' book and register throughout his area in the future and should as soon as practicable inform all the Rating Authorities concerned of the extent to which he contemplates making use of the services of their officers upon this work.

The Draft Order referred to above reads as follows:—

3.—(1) Subject to the provisions of this article, the powers and duties of overseers under the enactments relating to the preparation of the jurors' book

and register of electors are hereby transferred to the rating authority.

(2) If the registration officer at any time shall send the rating authority a request that one or more of their officers shall be designated by them to perform the duties of overseers in relation to the preparation of the jurors' book or the register of electors, the rating authority shall forthwith designate one or more of their officers for the purpose, and the officer or officers so designated shall, while the designation continues in force, perform the duties of overseers in relation to those matters or either of them, as the case may be:

Provided that if the registration officer shall raise a question whether an officer designated by a rating authority is an officer to whom the work can properly be assigned by the rating authority, that question shall be determined by the Secretary of State.

(3) A designation under this article of an officer to perform any duty shall cease to have effect if either the rating authority revoke the designation, or the registration officer notifies the rating authority that the assistance of the designated officer will not be required by him in the performance of that duty:

Provided that any such revocation or notification, if given at any time between the 30th day of April and the 15th day of October in any year, shall not have effect until the 15th day of October in the same year.

(4) Where the rating authority revoke a designation under this article they shall forthwith send notice of the revocation to the registration officer.

(5) The remuneration and expenses of a designated officer in respect of—

- (a) the preparation of the jurors' book shall be payable by the rating authority in accordance with the enactments relating to the preparation of the jurors' book; and
- (b) the preparation of the register of electors shall be defrayed in accordance with the enactments relating to the registration of electors.

(6) Any document required to be signed by overseers and relating to the preparation of the jurors' book or the registers of electors may be signed by an officer designated under this article by the rating authority.

THE URBAN & RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL AND GUARDIANS ELECTIONS.

Article 2.

Preliminary announcements of the candidatures having been made the next obvious thing to do is to overhaul the whole machine of the Party for the purpose of fighting the elections. Here it will sometimes be found advisable instead of discussing all election work within the narrower circles of the Party itself to convene workers' meetings and so bring in persons who are not accustomed to attend ordinary Party gatherings but who can be depended upon to put in good work at the election. Where Ward Committees exist on a really democratic basis, this advice should not of course be taken.

There should be an early determination to fight the elections as fiercely and thoroughly as all the resources of the Party will allow. The Spring elections are excellent training for the Parliamentary contest and they bring their own reward. In rural areas one cannot expect too much, but in urban areas, that is, in Municipal Boroughs for Guardians elections, and in the area of Urban District Councils, the fight ought to develop intensely, and the aim should be to make it second only to a Parliamentary contest itself.

The time still at disposal is very considerable. In our articles on Local Government Elections last year we gave, on page 20 of the February issue, a table, showing the dates for proceedings, including the dates for the official notice of election, and reference to the article named will supply our readers with the information needed for all the classes of elections referred to in this article.

Some time in the month of February might well be spent in procuring nominations for the Labour candidates. It is a really fine plan to secure a regular canvass for nominations. Some workers actually find it easier to go round with a paper in their hand inviting electors to subscribe a nomination paper for the Labour candidate than they do to go round later on in the regular canvass asking for promises. And after all a candidate whose nomination papers have been popularly subscribed has a good start on the man on the other side whoever he may be. If the election fund permits, it is a good policy to send a

letter of thanks from the candidate to those who have subscribed to the nomination papers. This tends to cement the promise and to bring the subscriber into closer touch with the Party.

But the regular canvass is as important in Local Government elections as in Parliamentary elections, and preparations should early be made to accomplish this work. Promises are fairly easy to secure when the election is a long way off, but these cannot be relied upon, and a supplementary canvass nearer the time of the polling is essential. Canvasses that are associated with the campaign of meetings invariably produce the best results. That is to say a district might be selected for a number of outdoor meetings during a particular week, or even on a particular night, and canvassers, however few they may be, should be concentrated here, always, if possible, in company and not singly. At the houses they visit invitations can be given to the outdoor meetings, and frequently the canvasser gets opportunity in the meeting later on to meet the persons whom he has just canvassed. Anything of this nature which helps to create the personal touch is helpful and means a better result.

Indoor meetings at the Spring elections are rarely so well attended even as the corresponding meetings at the Municipal elections. The reason may be found, not altogether in the lesser interest aroused, as in the fact that the days are lengthening, the areas are somewhat less populated, and by the time March has arrived the garden calls. We have seen good results from a tour made on a Saturday afternoon and Sunday morning in the local allotments. The man on the allotment is generally in an amiable mood, and if the canvasser himself is a kindred spirit some useful promises might be booked.

Standard Election Addresses for all candidates are quite a common thing at the Local Government elections, and we favour the idea. It nevertheless has a greater effect if, at any rate, some part of the circular is left to give some personal particulars of each candidate. Standard addresses must not be made too general or too impersonal. The

object of them is to secure a common policy and to save expense." Standardisation should not be pushed to the point of killing personality or destroying a local appeal. There is always the risk too of neglecting to take note of some local feeling or parish pride.

Literature specially applicable to the local elections is not abundant. Some leaflets are however, to be obtained and these must be supplemented by locally printed matter dealing with local questions. In some Urban Council areas a local election newspaper is a possibility and wherever the size of the electorate and importance of the fight justifies it, the local news sheet is of sound electioneering value.

Regarding the Guardians Elections, Labour's policy is clear and distinct, and unbending. Too much prominence cannot be given to it.

(To be continued.)

THE LABOUR PARTY AND THE CO-OPERATIVE PARTY. Proposed New Agreement.

The readers of the "Labour Organiser" will be particularly interested in the proposed agreement between the Labour Party and the Co-operative Party, publicity to which recently occurred owing to the necessity of its inclusion in the Annual Report which the Co-operative Party Executive is presenting to the Annual National Conference of the Co-operative Party to be held at Derby on the 29th and 30th January.

Its publication therefore in one direction places us at liberty to give our readers the benefit of the proposals which are set out below. It should be distinctly understood, however, that this agreement is not yet in operation. It is the result of negotiations between the Joint Committee of the National Executives of the two Parties, and although it has already received the approval of the two National Executives it will not become operative until approved by the Co-operative Party and the National Annual Conference of the Labour Party. Should any amendment be made on either side the effective operation will of course be delayed.

The proposals are—

National.

1. That a joint Sub-Committee be established representative of both Executives with regular meetings and defined powers, subject to the

confirmation of the two National Executives.

2. That there be an exchange of the Minutes of the two National Executives.
3. That arrangements be made from time to time for joint campaigns on special subjects and during Elections.

Divisional Labour Parties and Local Co-operative Parties or Councils.

4. That local Co-operative Parties or Councils be eligible for affiliation to Divisional Labour Parties.
5. That the basis of affiliation fees payable by local Co-operative Parties or Councils be agreed upon by the local organisations of the two Parties, subject to the approval of the two National Parties.
6. That representation and voting powers of Co-operative Parties or Councils be in proportion to affiliation fees payable.
7. That Co-operative Political Councils or Parties shall have similar rights and accept similar responsibilities as other affiliated organisations.
8. That the rights and responsibilities of affiliated bodies under this Agreement, in Scotland be similar to those granted to organisations in England and Wales.

It was agreed that this Agreement be optional upon local Co-operative and Labour Parties and not intended necessarily to interfere with existing arrangements where Co-operative Societies are already affiliated to the Labour Party or where an agreement has been established.

(concluded from page 6).

On the other hand, if a Branch calls a special meeting, and invites the candidate to address it, that clearly is an election meeting and subject to the rules above given, applicable to the particular class of election. It is worth noting that at an election meeting of this sort one could legitimately do more work and quiet organising than it would be possible to do safely in an ordinary Branch meeting which one wished not to translate.

However, what a lot of pother and worry just because Branches will go into the parlours of their enemies! It is good that some Unions positively forbid meetings on licensed premises. When more Unions adopt this rule the work of organisers and agents will be easier.

THE WORK OF THE SOCIALIST SUNDAY SCHOOLS.

In consequence of the constant attacks made upon the Children's Section of the Socialist Movement from Press, platform, and pulpit, the following notes may be found useful.

There are 110 schools in the country, with which are associated approximately 6,000 children, 1,000 senior scholars, and 1,500 adults.

All the teaching is inspired by and directed towards the ultimate purpose of Socialism—the placing of human life on its true basis of co-operation and brotherhood instead of competition and struggle.

In the S.S.S. it is sought to surround the children with a Socialist atmosphere and imbue them with the Socialist sentiment; to develop the feeling of fellowship and the commonweal, the working together “as brothers and sisters” for the common good.

One hour per week is not enough in which to create this atmosphere. In addition to school lessons it is sought to inspire the children by:—Drama, Needlecraft, Citizen Peace Crusade, Morris Dancing, Singing, Nature Studies, Rambling, Correspondence in Esperanto and English with children at home and abroad, and by the publication of a monthly magazine, “The Young Socialist.”

The Barnet Church Parochial Council appointed a committee to visit two of the 36 London Schools. The committee reported that—

“The lessons given are of a high moral character.”

The Rev. W. Macintosh Mackay, D.D.:—

“From an ethical point of view the teaching is unexceptional. The spirit of love to all mankind is set in the forefront of the creed.”

It is a matter of great difficulty to nail down the libellous statements against the S.S.S., but a pamphlet issued by Colonel Ashmead Bartlett, which in effect charged J. P. Gardner, M.P., the victor of Hammersmith, with supporting the instruction of children in blasphemous and seditious teaching, formed the basis of an action which resulted in the retired Conservative apologising and withdrawing the statement and paying substantial damages.

Commenting on this, the “Christian World” of 29-10-25 stated:—

“This Socialist Sunday School outcry has proved a very unsatisfactory line of attack. Blood-curdling stories were accepted without any real effort at verification, and the result is that anti-Socialist propaganda has received a nasty jar.”

AGENCY APPOINTMENTS.

The following agency appointments not previously notified in the “Labour Organiser” have been made:—

Fulham West: Mr. E. P. Parr, Address, 288, Munster Road, Fulham, London, S.W.6.

Greenwich: Mr. A. Glyn Evans, formerly of Flint Division, Address, 10, Blackheath Road, London, S.E.10.

Sheffield Central: Mr. Tom Gibb, formerly of Doncaster and Morpeth Divisions, Address, c/o Mr. Sears, 138, Abbeydale Road, Sheffield.

Hackney Central: Mr. L. Fothergill, formerly of Coventry and Leeds (Co-op), Address, 23, Dalston Lane, Dalston, E.8.

The following changes of addresses from those given in our November issue are now notified:—

Mr. W. H. Hunt, Crewe Division, Labour Agent's Office, Market Terrace, Crewe.

Mr. S. J. Gee, North Norfolk Division, Address, “The Dingle,” Overstrand Road, Cromer, Norfolk.

Mr. H. E. Tate, North East, Bethnal Green Division, 18, Victoria Park Square, Bethnal Green, London, E.2.

Miss G. Francis, Woman Organiser, Eastern Area, Address, 15, Heathcote Street, London, W.C.1.

Mr. S. Dye, Cambridgeshire Division (correction of spelling), c/o West Green Farm Barrington, Cambs.

Mr. H. Dawson Large, St. Pancras, S.E. Division (correction of spelling), 65, Chalton Street, N.W.1.

Our November list omitted the name of Miss Ada Broughton, Woman Organiser in the Bermondsey Division, whose address is, 155, Lynton Road, Bermondsey, London, S.E.1.

HOW DISAFFILIATION WORKS.**East Lewisham Sees It Through.**

Members of the Movement in different parts of the country have evidenced interest in what is happening in constituencies where the Party has been disaffiliated. The misrepresentation of the Communist Press in some of these places, notably East Lewisham, are designed to give the impression that the old Parties carry on as heretofore, only more so. How devoid of truth is this suggestion may be gathered by the following notes which we have received from East Lewisham, and which we are glad to publish.

Founded in June, 1919, the East Lewisham Divisional Labour Party, in a large, almost exclusively residential suburb of London, made rapid strides. The General Elections of 1922, 1923 and 1924 brought Labour polls of 8,400, 9,600 and 13,400 respectively. The individual membership, paying a subscription of 4d. per month, grew to two thousand. A full-time agent was engaged in July, 1925. A freehold house was acquired in January, 1926, and converted into Party offices.

Here, in fact, was too juicy a morsel for the C.P.G.B. to miss. Gradually the composition of the General Committee was changed. Fresh delegates were appointed by small Trade Union branches, often in excess, as ultimately transpired, of the number allowed by the rules. The usual tactic was employed, and in July of this year the Party was disaffiliated.

All the officers but one remained loyal. A circular letter was posted to every individual member, and to every affiliated organisation, inviting attachment to a new Party. Within a fortnight 600 replies had been received by post. Twelve Trade Union branches and the R.A.C.S. expressed their desire to support the new Party.

A new General Committee was summoned, and its first business was to pass new rules, the effect of which is to exclude, completely, all members of the C.P. A special membership form was printed. The Ward organisations were reformed. All debts were paid. The Party, in affiliation with the National Executive, now numbers 1,433 individual members and over 8,000 affiliated members. The year closes with £100 paid off on the premises, and with £200 in the General Fund and the Parliamentary Fund.

The moral that the East Lewisham Labour Party has drawn from its experience is: First, that where there's a will there's away; second, it is very dangerous to try to work to the Model Rules Set E. of the Labour Party.

The position now is that the disaffiliated group has decided to recommend to its members the adoption of another Parliamentary candidate, and is in direct and open opposition to the Party. The Borough Party consists almost entirely of representatives of the disaffiliated group. The two Constituency Parties in the divided Borough are as sound as a bell. It is time that the anomaly of Borough Parties in London Boroughs were removed and the London Labour Party allowed to function as the "Borough Party" for London.

HOW TO KILL AN ORGANISATION.

Don't come to the meetings.

But if you do, come late.

If the weather doesn't suit you, don't think of coming.

If you do attend a meeting, find fault with the work of the officers and other members.

Never accept an office, as it is easier to criticise than to do things.

Nevertheless, get sore if you are not appointed on a committee; but, if you are, do not attend the committee meetings.

If asked by the chairman to give your opinion regarding some important matter, tell him you have nothing to say. After the meeting tell everyone how things ought to be done.

Do nothing more than is absolutely necessary, but when other members roll up their sleeves and willingly, unselfishly use their ability to help matters along, howl that the organisation is run by a clique.

Hold back your due as long as possible, or don't pay at all.

Don't bother about getting new members.

"Let the other fellow do it."

FRED CONSTANTINE.

THAT BOUND COPY

Have you ordered yours yet?

HOW TO PUT BY MONEY FOR THE ELECTION.

The majority of Divisional Labour Parties to-day are charged with the responsibility of raising either the whole of the election funds for a Parliamentary election or a substantial part of them, and the matter invariably presents difficulty. It is a problem too apt to be shelved, and the election comes all too soon for finances.

It is with special pleasure therefore that we print below one of the ablest propositions for raising a steady income for this purpose which we have seen outlined. These proposals were placed before the Loughborough Labour Party recently by its energetic secretary, Mr. S. T. Jordan, of 5-6, Woodgate, Loughborough, and accepted *in toto*.

Report on the creation of an Election Fund, accepted by the Executive Committee, November, 1926.

Election Fund.

(a) The Divisional Labour Party in this area has suffered consistently since its formation from the lack of any clear-cut financial policy. No definite or successful attempt has been made to build up a Reserve Fund for any purpose. It has found itself faced at General Elections with no money to pay current expenses and with no fund to meet general expenses. It is a simple truth which the Divisional Labour Party has always ignored—that this Division cannot be won without an efficient fighting financial organisation. The establishment of an Election Fund for election purposes is a fundamental necessity.

(b) As a basis for the formation of an Election Fund, I venture to put forward for your consideration the following proposals, which I have listed as under:

- (a) The measures to be taken as part of the general work of the Division (The Permanent Measures).
- (b) The steps to be taken immediately preceding an election (The Emergency Measures).

Section A.

(c) As part of the general work of the Division, the following steps should be taken:—

- (i) Each affiliated Local Labour Party or Divisional Group or Socialist Society should be requested to organise one social event (concert, whist drive, dance, social, bazaar, harvest festival or similar event) during

the year for the benefit of the Divisional Election Fund. All profits from such events (for which the organising body would be financially responsible) should be paid into the Election Fund.

There are about 14 bodies affiliated to us. On an average net profit on each event of £2, I estimate a permanent income from this source of at least £30 each year.

- (ii) An appeal should be issued immediately to sympathisers for individual subscriptions (preferably annual subscriptions). The amount realised in the first year might not be great, but it would certainly tend to grow, and would keep the Division in close contact with its sympathisers.

A conservative estimate of this source would place it at £20 in the first year and £30 to £40 in the second.

- (iii) Half the proceeds of one of the larger annual Divisional efforts (e.g., Christmas Prize Draw or the Joint Gala) should be put aside for the Fund. I estimate this income at £30 to £40.
- (iv) Alternatively, the full proceeds of one of the larger annual efforts should be devoted to the Fund.

Section B.

(d) As soon as a General or By-election becomes imminent, the following steps should be taken immediately by the Party:—

- (i) An Election Fund Appeal should be issued to sympathisers for individual subscriptions. Under the stimulus of an approaching election, such an appeal might raise £60 to £100. In Loughborough alone there are 40 Trade Union branches, so that a general appeal throughout the Division would probably realise £60.

- (ii) A Special Election Fund Levy—authorised beforehand by a Delegates' Conference—should be made on all affiliated bodies. Such a levy might be fixed at 1s. per member (minimum) and would in that case realise a minimum amount of £50.

(e) The Committee will see that I estimate from these proposals under Section A a standing annual income for the Fund for £90 to £100; and under

Section B and Emergency Income of £150 to £200.

(f) It should be clearly realised and stated that all moneys raised by these schemes will be reserved for the Election Fund only.

(g) With the financial organisation and political machinery which we hope to have created in this Division, I am of opinion that the total cost of an election ought not to exceed £400.

(h) The importance of an Election Fund needs no stressing on my part. It is a necessity if this Division is to be won for Labour. I have great pleasure in submitting this report for the consideration of the E.C.

MANIFESTO ON CAPITAL PUNISHMENT.

We desire to bring before our fellow members in the Labour Movement the importance of supporting the present agitation for the abolition of the Death Penalty. Capital Punishment revolts the moral sense of the whole community. It is utterly futile—a fact abundantly proved by the experience of the many countries which have abolished it with no increase in murders. It causes suffering to the prison officials who have to carry it out and reacts disastrously upon the prison population. The sordid publicity which it provokes among the general public is known to encourage imitative crime. It is a relic of barbarism which hinders the reform of our whole prison system.

Our Movement, we know is almost unanimously ranged against Capital Punishment, but we all need to know more of the actual issues involved. No Home Secretary—not even in a Labour Government—can bring forward an abolition Bill unless he knows that he has an enlightened public opinion behind him, and there is strong evidence that the country is ready for it.

We would earnestly encourage every local Labour Party, Trade Union and I.L.P. Branch to seek an early opportunity of giving full consideration to the whole matter. We understand that The National Council for the Abolition of the Death Penalty (23 Charing Cross, Whitehall, London, S.W.1) will gladly send leaflets on request.

This reform is not a Party question, but we cherish the hope that our great Movement will be in the van of the campaign. Public meetings, letters to

the Press, the conversion of our friends, all this will be necessary if the Death Penalty is to be abolished. In this work we are anxious that our fellow members should lead the way.

Signed

ELEANOR BARTON, J.P.

ERNEST BEVIN.

MARGARET G. BONDFIELD, J.P., M.P.

H. N. BRAILSFORD.

A. FENNER BROCKWAY.

CHARLES RODEN BUXTON.

NOEL BUXTON, P.C., M.P.

RHYS J. DAVIES, M.P.

HARRY GOSLING, M.P.

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F. W. JOWETT, P.C., J.P.

GEORGE LANSBURY, M.P.

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HERBERT MORRISON, L.C.C.

ARTHUR PONSONBY, M.P.

F. O. ROBERTS, P.C., M.P.

ALFRED SALTER, J.P., M.P.

JOHN SCURR, M.P.

ROBERT SMILLIE, M.P.

BEN TURNER, J.P.

FRANCES EVELYN WARWICK.

ELLEN C. WILKINSON, M.P.

TIME-TABLE FOR BY-ELECTIONS.

1st day.—Receipt of writ and first possible day for notice of election by Returning Officer in any by-election.

2nd day.—Last possible day for notice in case of a borough.

3rd day.—Last possible day for notice of election in county or district borough.

4th day.—First possible day for nomination in case of a borough.

5th day.—First possible day for nomination in county or district borough.

8th day.—Last possible day for nomination in a borough.

11th day.—Last possible day for nomination in county or district borough.

12th day.—First possible day for polling in a borough.

13th day.—First possible day for polling in county or district borough.

18th day.—Last possible day for polling in a borough.

22nd day.—Last possible day for polling in county or district borough.

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REVIEWS.

"The General Strike, May, 1926, Its Origin and History." By R. Page Arnot. Cloth 3/6; paper 2/-. The Labour Research Dept., 162 Buckingham Palace Road, S.W.1. This book is a complete survey of the events up to the General Strike, and of the actual course of the Strike. The book is carefully documented and the analysis of the events leading up to the Strike pieces together the activities of the Government and of the other Parties involved. The record of the strike itself is told almost entirely in documents, though the writers opinions on certain controversial matters crop up at fairly frequent intervals. The whole book is, however, an invaluable record for every active worker. Together with its com-

panion volume ("The General Strike: Trades Councils in Action," by Emile Burns), the whole course of the strike Nationally and Locally has thus been faithfully recorded.

"British Imperialism in China." 1/- board; 6d. paper. The Labour Research Dept., 162, Buckingham Palace Road, S.W.1. The study of conditions in China is of prime importance to every Labour worker and sympathiser, and we therefore welcome the opportunity of studying in this little book the course of British relations with China and the work of Imperialist Capitalism, indicating as it does the close connection between British policy and banking and industrial interests. The connection of Capitalist interests with the origin of the last war makes it essential that Labour should be on its guard and well armed with a knowledge of past events in China and current tendencies. We are glad therefore that the sparse literature on this subject has been supplemented in so readable a form.

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